



Billing Code 3410–10

## **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **Commodity Credit Corporation and Foreign Agricultural Service**

#### **Notice of Funding Availability: Inviting Applications for the Foreign Market**

#### **Development Cooperator Program**

**SUMMARY:** The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that it is inviting proposals for the 2019 Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) program.

The Cooperator program is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) on behalf of CCC. The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications from eligible applicants for fiscal year 2019 and to set out criteria for the awarding of funds under the program.

**DATES:** All applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, on Friday, June 8, 2018. Applications received after this date will not be considered. FAS anticipates that the initial funding selections will be made by the end of October 2018, with the initial award dates estimated to be by the end of December 2018.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Applicants needing assistance should contact the Program Operations Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service *by courier:* Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250, or *by phone:* (202) 720–4327, or *by fax:* (202) 720–9361, or *by e-mail:* [uesadmin@fas.usda.gov](mailto:uesadmin@fas.usda.gov). Information, including a copy of the program regulations, is also available on the FAS website at the following URL address:

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/foreign-market-development-program-fmd>.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **A. Funding Opportunity Description**

*Announcement Type:* New.

*Award Instrument:* Grant.

*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:* 10.600.

*Authority:* The Cooperator program is authorized by Title VII of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5722), as amended. Cooperator program regulations appear at 7 CFR Part 1484.

*Purpose:* The Cooperator program is designed to maintain and develop foreign markets for United States agricultural commodities and products through cost–share assistance. Financial assistance under the Cooperator program will be made available on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein and in the Cooperator program regulations. All U.S. agricultural commodities, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration.

FAS allocates funds in a manner that effectively supports the strategic decision–making initiatives of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. In deciding whether a proposed project will contribute to the effective creation, expansion, or maintenance of foreign markets, FAS considers whether the applicant provides a clear, long–term agricultural trade strategy and an effective program time line against which results can be measured at specific intervals using quantifiable product or country goals. FAS also considers the extent to which a proposed project targets markets with the greatest growth potential. These factors are part of the FAS resource allocation strategy

to fund applicants who can demonstrate performance and address the objectives of the GPRA.

*Funding Available:* The Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended, provided up to \$34.5 million annually for the Cooperator program through FY 2018. Congress has not yet determined funding levels for FY 2019. This NOFA is being released prior to Congress appropriating funding for the Cooperator program for FY 2019. USDA makes no commitment to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards regardless of whether or at what level program funding for FY 2019 is provided.

## **B. Eligibility Information**

*1. Eligible Organizations:* To participate in the Cooperator program, an applicant must be a nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organization. Funding priority is given to organizations that have the broadest possible producer representation of the commodity being promoted and that are nationwide in membership and scope.

*2. Eligible Activities:* Under the Cooperator program, FAS enters into agreements with eligible nonprofit U.S. trade organizations to share the cost of certain overseas marketing and promotion activities. Cooperators may receive assistance only for generic activities that do not involve promotions targeted directly to consumers purchasing in their individual capacity. The Cooperator program generally operates on a reimbursement basis.

*3. Limits on Activities:* Cooperator program activities are approved for a single program year, with the approval dates specified in the allocation approval letter that is provided as part of the award approval package. Only those Cooperator program activities that are approved in each applicant's allocation approval letter may be

implemented, and those activities must be implemented during the 12-month program year specified in the allocation approval letter. Requests for activity changes during the program year must be approved in advance by FAS. Cooperator program participants must re-apply for the program every year.

*4. Funding Restrictions:* Certain types of expenses are not eligible for reimbursement by the program, and there are limits on other categories of expenses. FAS also will not reimburse unreasonable expenditures or expenditures made prior to approval. Full details are available in sections 1484.54 and 1484.55 of the Cooperator program regulations.

*5. Cost-Sharing:* To participate in the Cooperator program, an applicant must agree to contribute resources to its proposed promotional activities. The Cooperator program is intended to supplement, not supplant, the efforts of the U.S. private sector. The contribution must be at least 50 percent of the value of resources provided by FAS for activities conducted under the project agreement.

The degree of commitment of an applicant to the promotional strategies contained in its application, as represented by the cost-share contributions specified therein, is considered by FAS when determining which applications will be approved for funding. Cost-share may be actual cash invested or in-kind contributions, such as professional staff time spent on the design and implementation of activities. The Cooperator program regulations, including sections 1484.50 and 1484.51, provide detailed discussion of eligible and ineligible cost-share contributions.

*6. Other:* Applications should include a justification for funding assistance from the program – an explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without

federal funding assistance and why participating organization(s) are unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance.

*7. Intergovernmental Review:* An intergovernmental review may be required. Applicants must contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to comply with their state's process under Executive Order 12372 (see <http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/rgeo12372.pdf>). To ensure currency, the names and addresses of the SPOCs are maintained at the Office of Management and Budget's home page at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_spoc](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc).

### **C. Award Information**

It is anticipated that FAS will award approximately 25 awards under the 2019 Cooperator program, subject to programmatic approval and available funding. In general, all qualified proposals received before the submission deadline will compete for funding. FAS will review all proposals against the evaluation criteria contained in the program regulations.

Funding for successful proposals will be provided through specific agreements. FAS must approve in advance any subsequent changes to the agreement. FAS or another Federal agency may be involved in the implementation of approved agreements.

Once an award reaches its completion date, FAS will confirm that the participant has provided all of the required reports and will review the reports for completeness and content. Once the required reports are approved, FAS will prepare a closeout letter that advises the participant of the award closeout procedures. Once the closeout procedures have been completed, any remaining funding on the agreement will be deobligated.

### **D. Application and Submission Information**

*1. Address to Submit Application Package:* Organizations should submit their Cooperator program applications to FAS through the web-based Unified Export Strategy (UES) system. The UES allows applicants to submit a single consolidated and strategically coordinated proposal that incorporates requests for funding under all of the FAS market development programs. The suggested UES format encourages applicants to examine the constraints or barriers to trade that they face, identify activities that would help overcome such impediments, consider the entire pool of complementary marketing tools and program resources, and establish realistic export goals. Applicants planning to use the UES must first contact FAS' Program Operations Division to obtain site access information. The web-based application may be found at the following URL address: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/ues/webapp/>.

Applicants experiencing difficulty or otherwise needing assistance applying to the program should contact the Program Operations Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service *by courier*: Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250, or *by phone*: (202) 720-4327, or *by fax*: (202) 720-9361, or *by e-mail*: [uesadmin@fas.usda.gov](mailto:uesadmin@fas.usda.gov).

*2. Content and Form of Application Submission:* To be considered for the Cooperator program, an applicant must submit to FAS the information required by section 1484.20 of the Cooperator program regulations. Incomplete applications or applications that do not otherwise conform to this announcement or the Cooperator program regulations will not be accepted for review.

*3. Other Required Information:* In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's policy (68 FR 38402 (June 27, 2003)) regarding the need to identify entities

that are receiving government awards, all applicants must submit a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. An applicant may request a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at (866) 705-5711.

In addition, in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25, each entity that applies to the Cooperator program and does not qualify for an exemption under 2 CFR §25.110 must:

- (i) Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application or plan; and
- (ii) Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by FAS; and
- (iii) Provide its DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to FAS.

FAS may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements, and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time FAS is ready to make the award, FAS may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Similarly, in accordance with 2 CFR Part 170, each entity that applies to the Cooperator program and does not qualify for an exception under 2 CFR §170.110(b) must ensure it has the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with the applicable reporting requirements of 2 CFR Part 170 should it receive funding under the Cooperator program.

*4. Submission Dates and Times:* All applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, on Friday, June 8, 2018. By the application deadline, all Cooperator program applicants must also submit to FAS a signed certification statement as specified in 7 CFR 1484.20(a)(14). The completed certification statements can be sent via courier/delivery service to the Program Operations Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250. Applicants can also send a scanned copy of the signed certification statement via e-mail to: [uesadmin@fas.usda.gov](mailto:uesadmin@fas.usda.gov). Applications or certifications received after the deadline will not be considered.

**E. Application Review Information**

*1. Criteria and Review and Selection Process:* A description of the FAS process for reviewing applications and the criteria for allocating available Cooperator program funds is as follows:

(1) Phase 1—Sufficiency Review and FAS Divisional Review

Applications received by the closing date will be reviewed by FAS to determine the eligibility of the applicants and the completeness of the applications. These requirements appear in sections 1484.14 and 1484.20 of the Cooperator program regulations as well as in this Notice. Applications that meet the requirements will be further evaluated by the appropriate Commodity Branch office of FAS' Cooperator Programs Division. The Commodity Branch will review each application against the criteria listed in section 1484.21 of the Cooperator program regulations as well as in this Notice. The purpose of this review is to identify meritorious proposals. The Commodity



Branch then recommends an appropriate funding level for each application for consideration by the Office of the Deputy Administrator, Office of Trade Programs.

(2) Phase 2—Competitive Review

Meritorious applications are passed on to the Office of the Deputy Administrator, Office of Trade Programs, for the purpose of allocating available funds among those applicants. Applicants will compete for funds on the basis of the following allocation criteria as appropriate (the number in parentheses represents the percentage weight factor):

(a) Applicant's Contribution Level (40): The applicant's 6-year average share (2014–2019) of all contributions under the Cooperator program compared to the applicant's 6-year average share (2014–2019) of the funding level for all Cooperator program participants.

(b) Past U.S. Export Performance (20): The 6-year average share (2013–2018) of the value of U.S. exports promoted by the applicant compared to the applicant's 6-year average share (2013–2018) of the funding level for all Cooperator participants plus, for those groups participating in the MAP program, the 6-year average share (2013–2018) of all MAP budgets.

(c) Past Demand Expansion Performance (20): The 6-year average share (2013–2018) of the total value of world trade of the commodities promoted by the applicant compared to the applicant's 6-year average share (2013–2018) of all Cooperator program expenditures plus, for those groups participating in the MAP program, a 6-year average share (2013–2018) of all MAP expenditures.

(d) Future Demand Expansion Goals (10): The total dollar value of projected world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2024 compared to the applicant's requested funding level.

(e) Accuracy of Past Demand Expansion Projections (10): The actual dollar value share of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for the year 2017 as reported in the 2019 Cooperator program application compared to the projection of world trade of the commodities being promoted by the applicant for 2017 as specified in the applicant's 2014 Cooperator program application.

The Commodity Branches' recommended funding levels for each applicant are adjusted by each weight factor as described above to determine the amount of funds allocated to each applicant.

In addition, FAS, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. FAS will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by

applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. §200.205 “Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.”

## **F. Award Administration Information**

*1. Award Notices:* FAS will notify each applicant in writing of the final disposition of its application. FAS will send an approval letter and project agreement to each approved applicant. The approval letter and project agreement will specify the terms and conditions applicable to the project, including the levels of Cooperator program funding and cost-share contribution requirements. All successful applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with the Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions, which are available online at: [https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants/general\\_terms\\_and\\_conditions/default.asp](https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions/default.asp). The applicable Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions will be for the last year specified at that URL, unless the application is to continue an award first awarded in an earlier year. In that event, the terms and conditions that apply will be those in effect for the year in which the award was originally made unless explicitly stated otherwise in subsequent mutually-agreed amendments to the award.

Before accepting the award the potential awardee should carefully read the approval letter and program agreement for instructions on administering the grant award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under Federal Awards. Recipients must accept all conditions in this NOFA as well as any special terms and conditions in the approval letter and program agreement to receive an award under this program.

2. *Reporting*: FAS requires various reports and evaluations from Cooperators. Required reports include an annual contributions report that identifies contributions made by the Cooperator and the U.S. industry during that marketing plan year. All Cooperators must also complete at least one program evaluation each year and must provide program success stories on an annual basis, or more often when appropriate or required by FAS. There are additional reporting requirements for trip reports, evaluation reports, and research reports. Reporting requirements are detailed in the Cooperator program regulations in sections 1484.53, 1484.70, and 1484.72.

**G. Agency Contact(s)**

1. *Application Submission Contact(s) and Program Support*: For additional information and assistance, contact the Program Operations Division, Office of Trade Programs, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture *by courier*: Room 6512, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250, or *by phone*: (202) 720-4327, or *by fax*: (202) 720-9361, or *by e-mail*: podadmin@fas.usda.gov.

2. *Grants Management Contact(s)*: Eric Bozoian, Grants Management Specialist, Foreign Agricultural Service, United States, Department of Agriculture, Email: Eric.Bozoian@fas.usda.gov, Office: (202) 378-1054.

Signed at Washington, DC on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April, 2018.

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James Higgiston  
Acting Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, and  
Acting Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

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